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'Reform' the monster

CIA inquiry a sham

By JOHN COOK

Another major "reform" of the Central Intelligence Agency is fast taking shape.

Hit with a series of exposes of illegal clandestine activities from congressional investigations and revelations of its dirty tricks in major newspapers, the CIA's public image is at the lowest point in its history.

At the same time, the agency has weathered the storm of investigations with little or no effect on its capacity to continue its mission in behalf of U.S. imperialism.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, headed by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), posed the greatest potential threat to the CIA's closely guarded secrets. But in recent weeks the committee has shown signs of running out of steam. It never challenged the basic concepts behind CIA policies and, despite exposure of a plethora of "intelligence abuses," the inquiry has been geared toward bolstering the sources, morale, prestige and credibility of the spy agency.

President Ford's recent ouster of CIA Director William Colby and the naming of former Republican Party chairman George Bush as his replacement is a first step in the "reform" process. The Bush nomination was intended to give a new face to the CIA and allow the White House a greater degree of control over its activities by purging the ranks of diehard opponents to Ford's policies.

The announcement of Colby's replacement was timed to take the thrust out of one of the expected recommendations from Congress for reforming the CIA. But it appears the action was premature.

As Colby was cleaning out his desk at CIA headquarters, a Ford aide implored him to stay on until Bush was confirmed for the top post, which may be several months, if it happens at all.

OPPOSITION TO BUSH

Apparently Bush will be staying in his current post as head of the U.S. liaison office in the People's Republic of China until after Ford's scheduled visit there in December. The temporary reinstatement of Colby is also believed aimed at keeping the number two man at the CIA, Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, from taking over in the interim period. Walters was named as "a good friend of the White House" during the Nixon coverup of the Watergate

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